No. 8. *On Cruelty to Animals.*

James, chap. 2, v. 13. "He shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath shewed no Mercy."

Let him who entertains the least doubt of the Truths of Christianity, in justice to himself, observe how truly analogous the Law of Christ is with the common dictates of humanity; with every generous passion of the mind; with every tender sentiment the human breast can form; and all that is truly great and noble. I say, let him do this, and he will see that was this law universally revered and practised, what a state of general and unmixed happiness would be restored to Man.

The Glorious System of Ethics delivered by our Saviour on the Mount, is calculated to answer all the exigencies of our Temporal Condition; its main scope and design being to prepare us for a happy termination of it; and, since Death is the unavoidable condition of life, and absorbs all lesser considerations; an entire reconciliation to it, on the principles of a Rational Hope of Immortality, ought to be the great end of all human actions, and of all the thoughts, devices, and desires of the human heart.

The troubles of life are many; and the sensibility of man's heart leads him, not only to be afflicted by his own troubles, but to sympathize and take part in the troubles of others.--- This, by some, has been called a Weakness; but it is a weakness

of which human nature may boaſt. By participating the ſorrows of others, we leſſen and divide them; and, by a humane interference, where we cannot Remove the pain, we frequently Mitigate and Soften it; we become the Friend of the Unfortunate, and the Reliever of his Wretchedneſs. This Spirit of Philanthropy is a Godlike principle, planted in our minds by our Creator, and there meeting its reward. The Humane man has no other view than that of diſſipating and removing Sorrow, and the ſatisfaction of having done it, with the gratitude conſequent upon it, is to him an ample reward. The ſame principle that leads him to ſuccour his fellow-creature, impells him to do the ſame with the creatures below him. The many opportunities therefore we have for the exerciſe of kind offices, ſhould be religiouſly attended to, and none ſhould be paſſed by; for, He that is merciful to a brute, will of courſe be tender to his fellow-creature.

By Mercy we are to underſtand, that charitable diſpoſition that leads us to temper ſeverity by mildneſs, and lighten the hand of affliction. Mercy to Man is ſhewn in the mildneſs of puniſhments; and mercy to Beaſts, in the ſofter modes of Compulſion and Slaughter. Death to Man is dreadful, from the fear of conſequences; but, otherwiſe conſidered, it is Nothing; the ſeparation of ſoul and body is ſo little painful, that it is compared in Scripture to a Sleep. Men have gone to their laſt home without a groan, a ſigh, or a pain. When men die convulſed they feel no pain, their ſenſes being gone.---With reſpect to the brute creation, Death is far leſs an evil. Void of apprehenſion, they know no fear, and loſs of

life to them is merely the pain the ſuffer from they wound, leſs, perhaps, than the pricking of the ſpur, or the laſh of the whip. God having made the animal creation for the uſe and food of man, we are juſtified in taking away their lives; but the means we take, either to compel them to work, or to kill them for food, ſhould be tempered with mercy, and no wound inflicted more than is neceſsary.

Was the Man, whoſe profeſſion it is to ſlay the harmleſs Lamb, to mangle the helpleſs victim, and ſacrifice its life to brutal ſport, he would be thought a monſter in nature, and not worthy of the rank of man in ſociety. If then ſuch an act would draw on a man this juſt cenſure of every diſcerning perſon, how much worſe would ſuch a man appear in the eyes of the Chriſtian world, who would torment by their barbarity, animals not even deſtined for ſlaughter, but the ſervice or amuſement of man.

That ſuch inattention to brutes is oppoſite to the will of God is evident from the direction to Moſes, "Thou ſhalt not ſee thy Brother's aſs, or his ox, fall down by the way, and hide thyſelf from them; thou ſhalt ſurely help him to lift them up again." God hath reſpect to all his creatures. The Prophet Jonah, when he appealeth to God for the breach of his word in not deſtroying the Ninevites, receives this reply from him, "Should I not ſpare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than ſix-ſcore thouſand perſons that cannot diſcern betwen their right-hand and their left-hand, and alſo much cattle."

From theſe expreſſive cares of God for the brute creation we may

naturally infer, that tenderneſs to them is well pleaſing to Him. "Bleſſed are the Merciful, for they ſhall obtain Mercy;" ſays our Saviour; and, "A righteous Man, (ſays Solomon) regardeth the life of his Beaſt."

The heart ſuſceptible of pity is a heart always well-diſpoſed to every part of the animal creation, whether it be brute or inſect. We ſay, he is a tender-hearted man; he would not hurt a worm. To deprive any living creature of life, without a great neceſſity, is a crime againſt humanity; and to torture them, and play with their ſufferings, is little elſe than ſavage barbarity. Bull-baiting, Cock-fighting, Badger-baiting, and other barbarous cuſtoms, are practices which the Law of God forbids, the Law of Nations deteſts, the Law of Society oppoſes, and, it is devoutly to be wiſhed, the Law of the realm would more ſtrictly prohibit. What Credit can be derived? or what can a nation profit by uncivilized Cuſtoms? Surely a country renowned for its conſtitution, its civil and religious liberties, for its diſcriminating laws, for its equity, and conſcience, ſhould exert itſelf in aboliſhing ſuch heatheniſh barbariſms. Ancient time, in the height of its errors and ſuperſtition, would revolt at ſuch a plan of a day's diverſion. The Gladiators and beaſts of prey, which their amphitheatres exhibited, were ſuch convicts and malefactors as, by the violation of their laws, had forfeited their lives to the ſtate; and expoſing them to ſuch combats was held a Mercy, for they were ſet at liberty, and made free, if they overcame their opponents. There might be ſome reaſon for theſe exploits in the dark ages of Ignorance and Knight-errantry; but there can be none in this enlightened

age. We profeſs ourſelves to be Chriſtians, and of courſe ſhould lay aſide all thoſe cruel acts which were a diſgrace even to Pagan nations.

It is aſtoniſhing to a feeling mind to reflect and think that men can take a pleaſure in purſuing the timid hare; to enjoy her ſhrieks, and tear the harmleſs deer to pieces, who can only expreſs its anguiſh by its tears. Can he boaſt of ſenſibility, who can be preſent at the worrying of a bull by dogs; at the baiting of a badger; at the throwing at a cock; or arming two ſuch birds with deadly weapons to mangle and deſtroy each other? Surely of all cruel creatures Man is moſt cruel; he ſhews it by the enjoyment he receives at ſuch public executions, as could not be mentioned without the utmoſt horror. It may be neceſſary to inflict puniſhment on criminals, but the ſtudied modes of torturing human nature is a diſgrace to Chriſtian countries.

Inſtead of cheriſhing hard-heartedneſs, we ſhould diſcourage it where we can. Children ſhould not be ſuffered to torture inſects, or put even a fly to death. They ſhould be taught mercy, and inſtructed in humanity. The ſhameful abuſe of the tame animals of this country is of late years riſen to an alarming height. It tells us Man is groving callous, and that ſociety will ſuffer by it. Hard-heartedneſs to brutes leads the way to hard-heartedneſs to Men; and in the exerciſe of cruelty, we loſe our natural feelings. What then are we to expect from this but ſavageneſs and barbarity, and all the train of deadly evils, rapine, wars, and murders; Man riſing againſt Man, Father againſt Son, and Son againſt Father; the annihilation of Society, and the overthrow of States? Such things have

happened, but God forbid they should ever again. It is our duty, however, to guard against the seeds of vice, and to stem the torrent before it overpowers us.

Pleasures are not forbidden to Man; but our pleasures must be rational. Profligate pleasures, and enjoyment of Wanton Cruelty, are breaches of Christianity. What idea do we entertain, or how should we like to trust to the mercy of a cruel Driver, an unfeeling Drayman, or a wanton Butcher?--- Let us suppose a horse, that has rendered his owner services for many years, worn out with age, and broken down with infirmity, yet willing to work whilst he has any strength left, and Could we see its owner loading this grateful animal (for horses are not without gratitude) I say, could we see this unfeeling owner loading this poor creature till he sinks under the weight, or whipping him unmercifully, without a fault, merely because he is unable to draw a load above his strength; or, in revenge for his inability, turning him out in a winter's night, to perish under the inclemency of the weather, where he can find no shelter, and perhaps but little food;---Could we be spectators of such a scene, and not execrate the wretch that causes it, and condemn the hardness of his heart, and the savageness of his nature?

And yet many such Christian Savages there are, who boast of being Members of a religion that forbids every species of cruelty or inhuman actions. It would degrade a nation of the most uncivilized tribe of Indians, to act the part performed by many in this our land. I know not how it is, but we see that men employed in the attendance on cattle, generally beget

a narrow diſpoſition, and exerciſe a ſhameful authority over them. We often ſee the wickedneſs of men burſting forth, like a houſe on fire, in horrid acts of violence, on the poor defenceleſs brutes over whom they can exerciſe their cruelties with impunity; and give way to their paſſion, on frivolous occaſions, with their fellow-creatures, and, tyrant-like, vent their rage upon their horſe or aſs, becauſe paſſive and helpleſs.

Gratitude being a uſual attendant upon Mercy, the Merciful Man has ever a grateful heart; he loves his horſes and his dogs, for their ſervices, and will take care they are well attended; often feed them with his own hand, and reſent injuries that are done them. Conſidering them as faithful, willing, and obedient ſlaves, and relying on his foſtering care, he is not inattentive either to their wants or their ſufferings. Call this attention what you will, call it benevolence, tenderneſs, gratitude, or mercy, nay, give it the name of policy, or ſelfiſhneſs, it riſes from a religious principle. Senſibility may be planted in our nature, but it is improved by religion. Civilization has always kept pace with the promulgation of the Chriſtian doctrine, and the more a nation is enlightened, the more forcibly the truths of religion are impreſſed upon the minds of men; the more they have immerged from a ſtate of barbariſm, the more they have felt the dependence of their own ſituation, the more docile they have become, and the readier to be friendly and ſerviceable to each other. Urbanity and ſoftneſs of manners are the conſequences; and the ties of mutual love are thus faſt bound and rivetted.

The power delegated to us by the Almighty over the beaſts

of the field, the birds of the air, and the fishes of the sea, is not to be prostituted to the base purposes of exercising it with wantonness and cruelty. Whatever we do should be consonant with the golden rule, "Do as you would be done by;" and we should take into consideration, that if we crush an insect or a worm, it feels a pang as great as if we slew a giant.

Compassion and tenderness of heart is due not only to the nobler animals---those which render us service---but to the meanest reptile that crawls upon the earth; and though the Almighty has ordained that a great number of his creatures should be daily slain for the food of man, yet he has ordered, that in the use of these no abuse shall take place, but that this painful necessity shall be tempered with mercy.

But, were there no other argument than brotherly affection to support this doctrine, this is sufficient of itself to do it: We know that Custom is second Nature, and why? Because habit will act very forcibly on our dispositions, and even change our natures. We know what a continuance in vice will do---We know the prevalence of good habits---We know what men can bring themselves to do---We know how an Executioner can inflict the severest sentence---how a Soldier can slaughter, a Surgeon can amputate, and a Butcher can mangle. Their sensibility dies with their practice, and their feelings are lost in their professions. In some measure this is right, for without firmness, and a command of themselves, they could not perform their offices. But this should teach us, that if unfeeling acts tend to harden the heart, and habituate to cruelty; acts of sensibility and kindness will soften the heart, and accustom

it to commiseration. In shewing pity then to brute creatures we shall acquire compassion for our fellow-creatures; and, in repeated acts of mercy we shall learn to be merciful.

Let us then, in conformity to the will of our Creator, foster and cherish in our bosoms this humane disposition he has there implanted;---let us humanize our hearts by every means in our power;---let us encourage sensibility, as far as consistent with our professions;---let us be tender to each other, merciful to the creatures below us, and the God of Love and Peace, who harmonizeth all things, will in return be merciful unto us. God grant it---Amen!

Trusler. A Manuscript.